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**Testimony of Jan Jarrett, Vice President, Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future
(PennFuture)
Before the Environmental Quality Board
On the Proposed Mercury Reduction Rule
July 26, 2006**

Thank you for this opportunity to present PennFuture's views on this important public health issue. PennFuture will also be submitting detailed written comments for the record.

PennFuture fully supports the proposed mercury reduction rule. In August 2004, PennFuture submitted a petition for rulemaking on behalf of 10 other organizations asking the EQB to adopt a regulation requiring coal-fired power plants to reduce their toxic mercury emissions by 90 percent. While the rule proposed by DEP differs significantly from our original request, we believe that it will result in the reductions in mercury pollution that we seek and protect both public health and natural resources from mercury contamination.

We believe that the rule is necessary for the following reasons:

- Mercury is a neurotoxin that can interfere with the development of babies' brains and lead to neurological problems like learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, developmental delays in walking and talking and in extreme cases, mental retardation;
- More than 600,000 women of childbearing age have mercury blood levels that exceed the level set as safe by the National Academy of Sciences and the Environmental Protection Agency;
- Pennsylvania power plants are the second biggest mercury polluters in the country emitting more than 6800 pounds of mercury into the air in 2004;
- There is widespread mercury contamination of Pennsylvania rivers, streams and lakes, and Penn State monitoring has documented "hotspots" of mercury contamination downwind of coal-fired power plants;
- The federal Clean Air Mercury Rule (CAMR) will not provide adequate protection to Pennsylvania's public health and natural resources because power plants can comply with the rule by purchasing and banking mercury allowances rather than cleaning up. A Congressional Research Service report found that because of the banking and trading provisions of CAMR, mercury pollution from power plants would be reduced by only 70 percent by 2030. A National Wildlife Federation report based on projections by the Environmental Protection Agency found that by 2020, Pennsylvania power

plants would be emitting 45 percent more mercury than the state's CAMR cap and would be a net buyer of mercury allowances;

- The technology to reduce mercury pollution to meet the requirements of DEP's regulation is readily available, and installing the equipment will create jobs. Allegheny Energy announced that installing pollution controls at just one power plant will create 350 construction jobs and a number of permanent jobs to operate the equipment;
- Since the DEP rule is structured to leverage the co-benefits of power industry plans to install pollution controls to comply with the federal Clean Air Interstate Rule (CAIR), complying with the Pennsylvania mercury rule is affordable. To reach the 90 percent reduction, the National Wildlife report found that it would cost only \$34 million over the cost of complying with CAIR.

DEP's proposed mercury rule is a common-sense approach to ensuring that power plants clean up their toxic mercury pollution at a reasonable cost. PennFuture supports the rule and urges its approval by the Environmental Quality Board.